

CHAPTER 1
IOWA EMPOWERMENT BOARD

349—1.1(77GA,SF2406) Scope. These rules apply to the provisions of coordinated, collaborative services for children and families in Iowa. In addition, they apply to the system of community empowerment areas created in partnership between state government and communities in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406. The initial emphasis of these rules is to develop community empowerment areas in order to improve the well-being of families with young children and to reduce bureaucratic requirements that are duplicative or unnecessary and that are barriers to community efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local education, health, and human services programs.

349—1.2(77GA,SF2406) Purpose. Pursuant to 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 12, it is the intent of these rules to support families and to prepare children for school. Toward this goal, these rules shall accomplish the following:

1. Foster collaboration among state agencies which shall initially include the departments of human services, education, and public health and allow for the coordination of these agencies' funding and other resources.

2. Establish community empowerment areas with broad community representation with the goal of providing services collaboratively to families and children from birth through five years of age for the purpose of improving the quality of life for families with young children.

349—1.3(77GA,SF2406) Availability. It is the intent that community empowerment areas will be developed in every part of the state. It is anticipated that as local empowerment areas evolve and effectively implement the provisions of these rules in these areas, the initial structure for community empowerment areas provided in these rules will be revised by the Iowa empowerment board in order to best promote collaboration among state and local education, health, and human services programs. The duties of child welfare and juvenile justice decategorization projects and innovation zones will eventually be assumed by community empowerment areas.

349—1.4(77GA,SF2406) Definitions. For the purposes of these rules, the following definitions apply:

"Accountable" means that a community empowerment area board will take responsibility to explain to the public what the board does and does not accomplish.

"Advanced community empowerment area" means a community empowerment area which provides evidence of successful collaborative planning and implementation as defined in criteria designated by the Iowa board. It may include a community empowerment area that has formed in transition from an existing innovation zone or decategorization project.

"At risk" refers to those children who have been deprived of adequate food, clothing, safety, shelter, education or health care. A community might also consider those children who have not received sufficient and sensitive nurturing, stimulation, and discipline. Any of these factors may prevent children from reaching their potential in school and in life. Additional factors which may cause children to be at risk include:

1. Children who function below chronological age in one or more developmental areas, such as social-emotional, cognitive, motor, communication, as determined by an appropriate professional, such as specialists in early childhood education, health, or human services.

2. Children with limited English proficiency.

3. Children born at biological risk, such as low birth weight (under 1500 grams, approximately 3 pounds).
4. Children born with a diagnosed medical disorder, such as spina bifida or Down's syndrome.
5. Children with a history of prenatal exposure to potentially harmful substances such as alcohol, drugs, or lead.
6. Children born to a parent under the age of 18.
7. Children residing in a household where one or more of the parents or guardians have not completed high school or are illiterate.
8. Children residing in a household where one or more of the members of the household have been identified as a substance abuser, have a criminal history, or have a history of child abuse or family violence.
9. Children residing in a household where one or more of the parents or guardians are chronically mentally ill.
10. Children who have other special circumstances, including, but not limited to, being in foster care or being homeless.
11. Children in protective custody or who have siblings in protective custody.
12. Children who have limitations due to chronic conditions.
13. Children who are the subject of a department of human services substantiated abuse report or who have a sibling who has been the subject of a substantiated abuse report.
14. Children who are members of a low-income family (185 percent, or less, of the federal poverty level).
15. Children exposed to potentially harmful environmental hazards such as lead, elevated nitrate levels, or other toxic substances.
16. Children whose families experience barriers to accessing adequate health care.
17. Children who have been taken into custody for delinquent acts or who have been adjudicated delinquent or who have siblings who have been adjudicated delinquent.
18. Children who are parents or pregnant.
19. Children who are substance abusers.

Community empowerment areas may use any or all of the above definitions of "at risk," or they may identify other at-risk factors for use in their planning and implementation efforts.

"Blending of funding" means the overall planning and coordination, or pooling of funding streams, designed to support children and families. Such planning and coordination must be in accordance with federal and state laws.

"Citizen," for the purpose of these rules, means an individual who is a resident of the empowerment area and who is not an elected official or a paid staff member of an agency whose services fall under the plan or purview of the community empowerment board.

"Community empowerment area" means a geographic area as designated in accordance with these rules.

"Community empowerment area board" or *"community board"* means the board for a community empowerment area created in accordance with this chapter and approved by the Iowa empowerment board.

"Community empowerment area board advisory council" means an advisory body to the community board appointed to function on a continuing basis for the study and recommendations of solutions and policy alternatives for the problems arising within the functional area of community empowerment areas. The community board may appoint an advisory council consisting of professionals knowledgeable in the fields of health, human services, and early childhood care and education.

“Community empowerment assistance team” is a team designated by the Iowa empowerment board to provide technical assistance and other support to community empowerment areas.

“Community volunteer” means a citizen who has demonstrated a voluntary involvement in local activities serving in the best interests of the community.

“Core indicator of performance” means data used to assist in determining whether the desired results are achieved.

“Decategorization project” means a decategorization of child welfare and juvenile justice funding project operated under Iowa Code section 232.188.

“Developmentally appropriate” means that programs and services are suitable for a child’s age, interests, abilities, and needs.

“Family risk assessment” is a mechanism to support families in providing a physical and emotional environment for their children that promotes optimal health and child development. A family risk assessment applies screening tools designed to identify family assets and needs and to link families with resources. A family risk assessment can assist community empowerment areas in improving access to affordable health care and ongoing parent education and support, promoting family self-sufficiency, coordinating service integration, and identifying resource needs.

“Fiscal agent” means a public agency, as defined in Iowa Code section 28E.2, to be designated as the fiscal agent for a community empowerment area.

“Five-year-old child” means a child who is eligible for kindergarten (five years old by September 15), but is not yet ready for the school experience.

“Health” refers to all aspects of health care including mental, behavioral, and physical health.

“Innovation zone” means a local jurisdiction implementing an innovation zone plan in accordance with Iowa Code section 8A.2.

“Iowa empowerment board” or *“Iowa board”* means the Iowa empowerment board created in this chapter, hereafter referred to as the board.

“Iowa empowerment board advisory council” means an advisory body to the board made up of members of community empowerment area boards appointed to function on a continuing basis for the study and recommendations of solutions and policy alternatives for the problems arising in a specified functional area of state government. The board may appoint an advisory council consisting of representatives of community empowerment boards, including professionals knowledgeable in the fields of health, human services, and early childhood care and education.

“Iowa empowerment fund” means a fund created in the state treasury for moneys to be distributed to community empowerment areas for the purpose of supporting children and families in the empowerment area.

“Iowa empowerment grant programs” are those programs funded through the Iowa empowerment fund for the purpose of supporting children and families in the empowerment area through the provision of services which include, but are not limited to, the following: preschool programs, parent education and support programs, enhanced child care to meet the needs of children and families, and children’s health and safety.

“Readiness” means being prepared to successfully implement a plan for supporting children and families as specified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 8, subsection 5, paragraph “c.”

“Results-oriented” means that the focus of the Iowa empowerment board and the community empowerment boards will be on results which measure the impact that services have on Iowans and on changes in the core indicators of performance.

“Service consumer” means an individual or family receiving services or who has received services under the terms of this legislation.

“State agency” means a department of the executive branch including, but not limited to, the departments of education, public health, and human services.

349—1.5 Reserved.

349—1.6(77GA,SF2406) Iowa empowerment board created. An Iowa empowerment board is created in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 3. Initial appointments shall be made in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 18.

1.6(1) The board shall designate a community empowerment assistance team or teams of state agency staff to provide technical assistance and other support to community empowerment areas.

1.6(2) Technical assistance shall be provided in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 3, subsection 5.

1.6(3) Staffing services to the board shall be provided in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 3, subsection 6.

1.6(4) The board may designate an advisory council consisting of representatives from community empowerment areas as provided in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 3, subsection 7. Advisory council members may consist of persons knowledgeable or interested in the fields of health, human services, and education.

1.6(5) Election of officers and their terms of office shall be in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 3, subsection 8.

1.6(6) The board shall meet a minimum of four times during the state fiscal year.

a. Additional meetings may be called upon the request of the chairperson, or upon the call of a majority of the voting members.

b. A simple majority of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum.

c. All meetings of the board shall operate in accordance with the open meetings law as specified in Iowa Code chapter 21 and in accordance with the open records law as specified in Iowa Code chapter 22.

349—1.7(77GA,SF2406) Iowa empowerment board duties. The board shall perform the following duties relating to community empowerment areas, as specified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, sections 4 and 13.

1.7(1) In the event that additional appropriations are made to the Iowa empowerment fund account for distribution to the community empowerment areas, continued receipt of those funds is contingent upon showing evidence that progress has been made toward achieving results as measured through the use of core indicators of performance.

1.7(2) The Iowa empowerment board shall develop advanced community empowerment area arrangements for those community empowerment areas which are formed in transition from an innovation zone or from a decategorization governance board or which otherwise provide evidence of extensive successful experience in managing services and funding with high levels of community support and input. Advanced community empowerment areas are those which demonstrate and document the following:

a. Improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services through local education, health, and human services programs.

b. Experience and success in setting and achieving locally determined goals to improve the well-being of families and children, including the development of results-oriented core indicators of performance measures and the collection of data.

c. Experience in fiscal accountability and capacity.

d. Other evidence as presented to the board by community empowerment areas.

1.7(3) The board shall ascertain the degree of readiness for designation as a community empowerment area. The board shall also ascertain the readiness of a community empowerment board to effectively manage Iowa empowerment board grant(s).

1.7(4) The coordination of state services shall be as specified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 4, subsections 4 to 7.

1.7(5) The board shall provide for maximum flexibility and creativity in the designation and administration of the responsibilities and authority of community empowerment areas.

1.7(6) The board shall adopt rules pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 17A as necessary for the designation, governance, and oversight of community empowerment areas and the administration of this chapter. The board shall provide for community board input in the rules adoption process. The rules shall include but are not limited to the following:

a. Performance indicators shall be developed for community empowerment areas, community boards, and the services provided under the auspices of the community boards and shall be used in evaluating community empowerment areas, community boards, and the services provided under the auspices of the community boards. The board, in cooperation with the community boards, shall determine and periodically update appropriate methods to document progress. The board shall provide a set of core indicators of performance that all community boards shall use to measure progress and achieve results. The board shall review these indicators at least annually. The performance indicators to be developed shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Core indicators of performance as described in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 8, subsection 1, paragraph “a.”

(2) Other core indicators of performance derived from the council on human investment survey results or other current trends of information.

b. The performance indicators shall be developed with input from community boards and shall build upon the core indicators of performance for the school ready children grant program, as described in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 7.

c. The board shall develop minimum standards to further the provision of equal access to services subject to the authority of community boards.

d. The board shall establish guidelines for reporting progress by local empowerment areas, including progress made toward achieving results.

e. Reporting periods shall be established by the board.

349—1.8 Reserved.

349—1.9(77GA,SF2406) Community empowerment area. The purpose of a community empowerment area is to enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human services programs on behalf of the children, families, and other citizens residing in the area. Leadership functions, boundaries, and options to participate are as specified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 5.

349—1.10(77GA,SF2406) Approval by board. The designation of a community empowerment area and the creation of the community empowerment board are subject to the approval of the Iowa empowerment board. Criteria used by the board in approving the designation of a community empowerment area shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1.10(1) Existence of a large enough population and geographic area to efficiently and effectively administer the responsibilities and authority of the community empowerment board.

a. Community empowerment areas shall have, to the extent possible, a minimum population count of 150 children aged birth through five years; and

b. A minimum geographic area of one entire county or one entire school district.

c. Community empowerment area applicants may request an exception to policy based upon specific criteria established by the Iowa board.

1.10(2) Completion of a comprehensive community assessment which identifies existing services and resources available for families and children. The board will have the authority to identify minimum requirements for the community assessment.

1.10(3) Development of a comprehensive plan which, at a minimum, addresses the educational, health, and human services needs of children aged birth through five in the community empowerment area.

1.10(4) Identification of existing sources of funding targeted toward services and resources for families and children.

1.10(5) Evidence of existing collaborative efforts in the community empowerment area.

1.10(6) Identification of the members of the community empowerment board and their roles and responsibilities.

1.10(7) Designation of a public agency to be the fiscal agent for the community empowerment area.

1.10(8) Identification of core indicators of performance that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the school ready children grants. At a minimum, these shall include the core indicators of performance established by the board. Additional indicators may be chosen by the local community empowerment board.

1.10(9) Comprehensive plan for reporting on the progress and effectiveness of the community empowerment area in addressing the core indicators of performance. Progress reports shall include data supporting the measurement of core indicators of performance. Initial reporting of the baseline data for the core indicators of performance is required within one year following the date of designation as a community empowerment area.

1.10(10) Plan for encouraging the involvement of the citizens of the empowerment area in the selection of community board members.

1.10(11) Completion of an application process to the Iowa empowerment board for designation as a community empowerment area.

A county or school district not meeting these criteria may request an exception to policy in accordance with criteria established by the board.

349—1.11(77GA,SF2406) Rules for designation of community empowerment areas. The Iowa empowerment board shall adopt rules pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 17A providing procedures for the initial designation of community empowerment areas and for later changing the initially designated areas.

349—1.12(77GA,SF2406) Establishment of community empowerment area board. A community empowerment area board shall function as the governing board for a community empowerment area.

1.12(1) A majority of the members of a community empowerment area board shall be private citizens and elected officials. At least one member shall be a service consumer or the parent of a service consumer. Additional membership shall include a community volunteer and at least one decision-making representative from each of the following agencies: education, public health and human services. The balance of the members may be individuals who are employees of or who receive compensation from any of the following:

1. A school district.
2. A county.
3. A local board of health.
4. A hospital.
5. A charitable funding group.
6. The department of human services.
7. A religious institution.
8. An area education agency.
9. Juvenile court services.
10. An area substance abuse agency.
11. A community action program.
12. A city.
13. A business organization.
14. A labor organization.
15. A service club.
16. A business.
17. Consumers.
18. A private, community-based organization.
19. A neighborhood association.
20. A child care resource and referral service.
21. A library.
22. Others as determined by the community empowerment board, such as public health providers, individuals with early childhood expertise, or child care providers.

1.12(2) Initial community empowerment boards shall be established in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 14.

349—1.13(77GA,SF2406) Bylaws. Each community empowerment area shall develop its own bylaws. These bylaws shall be consistent with the goals of the empowerment legislation.

1.13(1) Meetings shall be conducted pursuant to the open meetings and open records laws.

1.13(2) The initial membership of the community board as identified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 14, subsection 1, shall be established in the proposal submitted to the board. One-third of the members shall serve for a one-year term, one-third for a two-year term, and one-third for a three-year term.

1.13(3) The community board members shall elect individuals to replace members who have served their initial terms. Subsequent terms of service shall be for three years. The composition of all elected community boards shall comply with the membership requirements as identified in rule 349—1.12(77GA,SF2406).

349—1.14(77GA,SF2406) Technical assistance. A community board may request technical assistance from service providers or public agencies.

349—1.15(77GA,SF2406) Advisory council. A community board may designate a professional advisory council, as defined in rule 1.4(77GA,SF2406), consisting of persons employed by or otherwise paid to represent an entity listed in rule 1.12(77GA,SF2406) or other provider of service.

349—1.16(77GA,SF2406) Community empowerment area board responsibilities and authority.

1.16(1) A community empowerment area board shall do the following:

a. Designate a public agency of this state, as defined in Iowa Code section 28E.2, to be the fiscal agent for grant moneys and for other moneys administered by the community board.

b. Administer community empowerment grant moneys available from the state to the community board as provided by law and other federal, state, local, and private moneys made available to the community board.

(1) Eligibility for the receipt of community empowerment grant moneys shall be limited to those community boards that have developed an approved school ready children grant plan in accordance with these rules.

(2) A community board may apply to the Iowa empowerment board to receive as a community empowerment grant those moneys which would otherwise only be available within the geographic area through categorical funding sources or programs.

c. Coordinate planning and budgeting with the decategorization governing board if a community empowerment area includes a decategorization project. By mutual agreement between the community board and the decategorization governance board, either of the following may occur:

(1) The community board may assume the duties of the decategorization governance board, or

(2) The decategorization governance board may continue as a committee of the community board.

d. Assume other responsibilities established by law or administrative rule.

1.16(2) A community board may do any of the following:

a. Designate one or more committees for oversight of grant moneys awarded to the community empowerment area.

b. Function as a coordinating body for services offered by different entities directed to similar purposes within the community empowerment area.

c. Develop neighborhood bodies for community-level input to the community board and implementation of services.

349—1.17 Reserved.

349—1.18(77GA,SF2406) Iowa empowerment grant(s). The purpose of the Iowa empowerment grants is to encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children, increase the basic skill levels of students entering school, increase the health status of children, reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect, increase the access of children to an adult mentor, increase parents' involvement with their children, and increase the quality and accessibility of child care.

349—1.19(77GA,SF2406) Grant components. The departments of education, human services, and public health shall jointly develop and promote an Iowa empowerment grant program which shall provide for all of the following components.

1.19(1) Core indicators. Core indicators of performance that will measure the effectiveness of the programs and services as outlined in the Iowa empowerment grant plan to support families and children in advancing all aspects of their health and development. At a minimum, community empowerment boards shall develop core indicators that address the following and that will be used to measure progress with respect to the current status and the desired status:

a. Early childhood environments.

(1) Children have access to safe, nurturing environments that are developmentally appropriate in promoting the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth of children.

(2) Early childhood programs have identified standards of quality that are based on research and best practices.

b. Health.

(1) Children receive regular health care, dental care, nutrition, and physical experiences needed to promote healthy minds and bodies.

(2) Families receive early and continuing prenatal care which shall include parent education and support.

c. Parent education and support.

(1) Parents enhance their knowledge about child development and about how to support their children's learning and life skills development.

(2) Parents utilize early childhood services as needed and rate them as effective and responsive in meeting family needs.

1.19(2) Additional indicators. Community empowerment areas may expand upon the indicators identified above. Technical assistance will be provided to community empowerment areas in developing the empowerment area-specific indicators to be used to meet the local goals.

349—1.20(77GA,SF2406) Readiness. The Iowa empowerment board shall develop guidelines and a process to be used for determining the readiness of a community empowerment area for administering Iowa empowerment grants. At a minimum, the following criteria will be used to determine readiness:

1.20(1) Documentation of county or school district collaborative planning for the provision of programs and services that will encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children, increase the basic skills of children entering school, increase the health status of children, reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect, increase the access of children to an adult mentor, increase parental involvement with their children, and increase the quality and accessibility of child care.

1.20(2) Completion, analysis, and reporting of a county or school district assessment that identifies the existing resources available to meet the needs of families and young children in the empowerment area.

1.20(3) Completion and reporting of a plan that addresses the lack of needed resources and how those resources will be developed.

1.20(4) Completion of a budget that identifies existing sources of funding, including in-kind and matching funding, and how those funds will be used in coordination with the school ready children grant and early childhood program moneys.

1.20(5) Identification of core indicators of performance.

1.20(6) A plan for the evaluation and reporting of progress toward achieving goals. Included in this must be a plan for the identification and evaluation of the effectiveness of the core indicators of performance in achieving local goals.

1.20(7) A plan for sustaining community efforts in the planning and implementation of local services and programs which may include leadership development and information management and data sharing within the empowerment area.

1.20(8) Additional requirements may be included at the discretion of the board.

349—1.21(77GA,SF2406) Technical assistance. Technical assistance concerning funding sources, program design, and other pertinent areas shall be available upon request to the community empowerment areas.

349—1.22(77GA,SF2406) Approval by board. The programs developed under 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 8, subsection 1, are subject to approval by the board. The board shall provide maximum flexibility to grantees for the use of grant moneys included in an Iowa empowerment grant. The department of human services will provide guidelines for the use of the early childhood program moneys.

349—1.23(77GA,SF2406) Use of grant. An Iowa empowerment grant shall, at a minimum, be used to provide the following:

1.23(1) Preschool services provided on a voluntary basis to children deemed at risk of not succeeding in elementary school as determined by the community board and specified in the grant plan developed in accordance with these rules.

1.23(2) Parent support and education programs promoted to parents of children from birth through five years of age. Affordable and ongoing parent support and education programs shall be offered in a flexible manner to accommodate the varying schedules, meeting place requirements, and other needs of working parents.

1.23(3) A comprehensive Iowa empowerment grant plan developed by a community board for providing services for children from birth through five years of age including, but not limited to:

- a. Child development services.
- b. Child care services.
- c. Training child care providers to encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children.
- d. Children's health and safety services.
- e. Assessment services to identify chemically exposed infants and children.
- f. Assessment services to identify children living with violence in the home.
- g. Parent support and education services.

1.23(4) At a minimum, the plan shall do all of the following:

a. Describe community needs for children from birth through five years of age as identified through initial baseline assessments conducted every three years and ongoing interim assessments. These assessments may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Assessments identifying the number of children aged birth through five years residing in the community empowerment area.

(2) Assessments identifying the barriers to resource and service accessibility and delivery in the empowerment area.

(3) Assessments identifying successful service delivery to children aged birth through five years and their families.

(4) Assessments including extensive feedback from empowerment area residents.

Additional information may be required at the discretion of the board.

b. Describe the current and desired levels of community coordination of services for children from birth through five years of age, including the involvement and specific responsibilities of all related organizations and entities.

c. Identify all federal, state, local, and private funding sources available in the community empowerment area that will be used to provide services to children from birth through five years of age.

d. Describe how funding sources will be used collaboratively and the degree to which the moneys can be combined to provide necessary services to children.

e. Identify the results the community board expects to achieve through implementation of the school ready children grant program.

f. Identify the community-specific quantifiable performance indicators to be reported in the annual report.

g. Describe how services will be delivered.

h. Identify the evaluation plan for the school ready children grant.

349—1.24 Reserved.

349—1.25(77GA,SF2406) Annual report. The community board shall submit an annual report on the effectiveness of the program in addressing school readiness and children's health and safety needs to the Iowa empowerment board and to the local governing bodies. The annual report shall indicate the effectiveness of the community board in achieving state and locally determined core indicators of performance.

349—1.26(77GA,SF2406) Funding for school ready children grant.

1.26(1) A school ready children grant shall be awarded to a community board for a three-year period, with annual payments made to the community board.

1.26(2) The board may grant an extension from the award date and any application deadlines based upon the award date to allow for later implementation date in the initial year in which a community board submits a school ready children grant plan to the board.

1.26(3) Receipt of continued funding is subject to the submission of the required annual report and the board's determination that the community board is measuring progress toward and is achieving the desired results identified in the grant plan through the use of core indicators of performance.

1.26(4) If progress toward achieving the identified results is not measured through the use of core performance indicators, the board may request a plan of corrective action or may withdraw funding.

1.26(5) The board shall distribute school ready children grant moneys to community boards with approved comprehensive school ready children grant plans based upon the degree of readiness of the community empowerment area to effectively utilize the moneys.

1.26(6) The school ready children grant moneys will be adjusted for other federal and state grant moneys to be received by the community empowerment area for services to children from birth through five years of age.

1.26(7) The board's provisions for distribution of school ready grant moneys shall take into account contingencies for possible increases and decreases in the provision of state and local funding in future fiscal years which may be used for purposes of school ready children grants and early childhood program grants and for differences in local capacity for program implementation and provision of local funding. In developing these provisions, the board shall consider:

- a.* Equity concerns.
- b.* Options for making capacity adjustments by restricting grant amounts based on service population size groupings to accommodate small, medium, and large population groupings.
- c.* Options for making adjustments to accommodate varying amounts of time and assistance needed for implementation, such as extending the grant period for more than one year.

1.26(8) The priorities for school ready children grant funds shall include:

- a.* Providing preschool services on a voluntary basis to children deemed at risk of not succeeding in elementary school.
- b.* Training child day care providers and others to encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children.
- c.* Offering parent support and education programs on a voluntary basis to parents of children from birth through five years of age.
- d.* Providing other services to children from birth through five years of age as specified in the comprehensive school ready children grant plan.

349—1.27(77GA,SF2406) Assessing degree of readiness.

1.27(1) A community board's degree of readiness shall be ascertained by evidence of successful collaboration among the following:

- a.* Public and private education;
- b.* Human services;
- c.* Health services or health interests;
- d.* Child care; or
- e.* A documented program design evidencing a strong likelihood of leading to a successful collaboration between these interests.

1.27(2) Other criteria which may be used by the board to ascertain degree of readiness and to determine funding amounts include one or more of the following:

- a.* Experience or other evidence of capacity to successfully implement the services in the plan, such as documentation of previous or current success in service plan implementation, or both.
- b.* A comprehensive, well-designed plan for commitment of local public and private funding and other resources, as available, for the implementation of the plan. The plan shall identify how funding will be aligned among services in order to achieve the core indicators of performance. The plan shall also include a proposed budget that supports the community service plan.

349—1.28(77GA,SF2406) Eligible for other funds. Community empowerment areas approved to receive Iowa empowerment funds to support a school ready children program are also eligible to receive moneys to support an early childhood program.

1.28(1) The community plan for the school ready children program must also identify how the early childhood program moneys would be utilized.

1.28(2) The early childhood program moneys are distributed through the department of human services for the purpose of supporting child care services in accordance with the rules as developed by the department of human services.

1.28(3) Community empowerment areas are not required to apply for or submit a plan for the early childhood program moneys if the empowerment areas do not intend to provide child care services within their empowerment area.

349—1.29(77GA,SF2406) Application period. The initial school ready children grant application period begins July 1, 1998. Subsequent grant periods will be based upon availability of funding.

349—1.30 Reserved.

349—1.31(77GA,SF2406) Iowa empowerment fund. An Iowa empowerment fund is created in the state treasury as specified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 9. A school ready children program account is created in the Iowa empowerment fund under the authority of the Iowa empowerment board to be administered by the director of the department of education. Moneys credited to the account shall be distributed by the department of education to designated community empowerment areas pursuant to criteria established by the Iowa board in accordance with law.

349—1.32(77GA,SF2406) Funding authorization. Funding may be determined as specified in 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 17.

349—1.33 Reserved.

349—1.34(77GA,SF2406) Transition board. The transition board shall be established in accordance with 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406, section 15.

349—1.35 and 1.36 Reserved.

These rules are intended to implement 1998 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2406.

[Filed emergency 7/27/98—published 8/26/98, effective 7/27/98]